

IMPACT AREAS



Labor Force Participation



Increased Wages



Equitable Access to Resources



Skills Development

Surveys among business leaders in Michigan show long-term concerns about hiring and training, with 81 percent of businesses citing a lack of applicants with necessary **skills development** as a top challenge to business growth. Michigan's **labor force participation** rate remains at 59.9%, lower than the national average of 62.4%. Additional investments in workforce development can address these challenges, instilling confidence for Michigan business growth or relocation, while ensuring **equitable access to resources** and **increased wages** for workers.

Michigan Skills Fund



Action: The Michigan Works! Association advocates for **\$100 million** over three years for the Michigan Skills Fund to support short-term training opportunities and credentials for high-demand occupations.

Overview: The Michigan Skills Fund covers the cost of training for individuals to earn industry-recognized credentials/certificates in high-demand fields. The inclusion of this program will allow businesses, education providers, and Michigan Works! agencies to partner to provide short-term training and upskilling opportunities to over 20,000 Michiganders in high-demand occupations, while focusing on immediate labor market needs not currently addressed by existing programs.

Outcome: Increased Wages, Labor Force Participation, Equitable Access to Resources, Skills Development

Youth Work Experience



Action: The Michigan Works! Association advocates for **\$80 million** over three years to support year-round youth work experience initiatives.

Overview: This would cover the cost of wages for youth participating in a work experience program. Michigan's young workers remain largely disengaged from the workforce, particularly when compared to historical pre-pandemic trends. Increased investment in youth work experience would provide year-round, high-quality employment opportunities to students, exposing them to new career pathways in high-demand fields, increasing the likelihood that these individuals will have sustainable employment in adulthood.

Outcome: Labor Force Participation, Skills Development

Michigan Works! Infrastructure Funding



Action: The Michigan Works! Association advocates for **\$30 million** in one-time investment for digital and physical infrastructure improvements across the Michigan Works! network.

Overview: Using one-time dollars for enhancing physical and digital infrastructure improvements across the Michigan Works! network will help the state better prepare for tomorrow's challenges. Investing in infrastructure enhancements will maximize the ability of Michigan Works! Agencies to serve customers more effectively, extending the reach of workforce services to a broader range of businesses and job seekers, especially in lower-income areas.

Outcome: Equitable Access to Resources, Labor Force Participation

Going PRO Talent Fund



Action: The Michigan Works! Association advocates to increase funding to **\$100 million** per year to meet the growing demand for this program.

Overview: The Going PRO Talent Fund provides grants to employers to assist with training, developing and retaining current and newly hired employees. Since 2014, more than 6,000 businesses have received grants and 170,000 workers have been trained, resulting in an average nine percent increase in post-training wages. Each year, demand for the program outpaces available funding. During the first funding cycle in FY23, more than \$77M in training grants were requested by businesses across the state, 40% higher than available funding. The lack of available funds results in a loss of potential training, hiring, and increased earning opportunities for Michigan workers.

Outcome: Increased Wages, Labor Force Participation, Equitable Access to Resources, Skills Development

Barrier Removal Employment Supports (BRES) Program



Action: The Michigan Works! Association advocates for sustainable, long-term funding to maintain the existing BRES policy to remove barriers and promote workforce equity.

Overview: For the past few years, the Michigan Works! system has administered Barrier Removal Employment Supports (BRES) program funding to provide real-time wraparound services to job seekers who may face complex barriers to sustainable employment. Through this flexible program, Michigan Works! Agencies have provided connections to reliable transportation, housing, child care, food access, and books and training materials for Michigan Reconnect students, immigrants and refugees, low-income earners, and justice-involved individuals. Maintaining the existing BRES policy will ensure barrier removal resources are maintained for a wide range of job seekers who require customized assistance.

Outcome: Increased Wages, Labor Force Participation, Equitable Access to Resources, Skills Development

Youth Career Awareness & Exploration



Action: The Michigan Works! Association advocates for dedicated funding to support regional youth career exploration events.

Overview: Career exploration is an important tool in helping students achieve educational and career success, while helping businesses begin to develop a long-term talent pipeline. Michigan Works! Agencies have worked closely with local business and K-12 leaders to support career exploration events such as MiCareerQuest and other hands-on activities with significant involvement from local employers in high-demand occupations and industries. Dedicated funding to support these efforts will help cover the overall cost of hosting events and partnering with organizations to support robust career awareness activities.

Outcomes: Equitable Access to Resources, Skills Development

Michigan Reconnect



Action: The Michigan Works! Association supports efforts to reduce the eligibility age to 21 for all Michigan Reconnect participants, while maintaining active involvement in assisting applicants with other workforce services, including barrier removal, career coaching, and short-term skills scholarships.

Overview: Michigan Reconnect is a tuition-free community college scholarship program for individuals over 25. Since the launch of Michigan Reconnect in 2021, more than 114,000 eligible individuals have applied to seek an associate degree or industry-recognized credential. Lowering the age to 21 will continue to expand economic and educational opportunities to a sizable portion of Michigan residents, particularly underrepresented populations who may face systemic barriers to education and career pathways. Additionally, the Michigan Works! Association reiterates the importance of Section 5 of PA 251 (2022), ensuring that applicants are connected to their local Michigan Works! agency for additional supportive services, career guidance, and coaching.

Outcome: Increased Wages, Labor Force Participation, Equitable Access to Resources, Skills Development